normally granted is 15 months or through bilateral agreement between parties to the dispute. India and the USA have signed a bilateral agreement for determining the RPT, which would be of little over 18 months. As per the agreement, all the existing QRs on BOP grounds would have to be removed by 1.4.2001.

Sick tea gardens in Himachal Pradesh

309. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of sick tea gardens in the public sector and also in private sector in Himachal Pradesh with their locations;

(b) what steps Government propose to take to remove there sickness;

(c) whether the Government consider merger of small and unviable tea estates; and

(d) if so, details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (d) There is no Public Sector or Private Sector tea garden in Himachal Pradesh and hence the question of sick tea gardens in these sectors does not arise. However, there is a large concentration of small holdings numbering 3679 with an area of 2325 ha. being the total area under tea in the State.

Trade protocol signed between India and Russia

310. SHRI RAMACHANDRAIAH RUMANDLA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and Russia have signed a trade protocol in Delhi in January, 2000;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken to utilize Russian rupee debt funds?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) A Protocol was signed during the Sixth Session of the Indo-Russian Working Group on Trade and Economic Cooperation, held at New Delhi in January, 2000, under the aegis of the Indo-Russian Inter-Governmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific and Technological and Cultural Co-operation. Various bilateral trade related issues including

review of implementation of the decisions of the earlier meeting, current status of trade and economic cooperation and steps for furtlier development, issues relating to cooperation in Transport, Banking and Financial and Agricultural sectors, etc. were discussed in the Protocol.

(c) The utilisation of the Russian rupee debt fund is governed by the Arrangement between the Bank for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and the Reserve Bank of India for implementing the provisions of the letters dated 28-29 January, 1993 and 6 September, 1993 exchanged between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of India. As per this Arrangement, the funds related to the payment of the Russian rupee debt are to be utilized for purchase of goods and services from India. The bulk of India's exports to Russian are on this account.

Import of second hand cars

311. SHRI RAMACHANDRAIAH RUMANDLA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether blanket permission to import any type of second hand car is allowed;

(b) if so, whether they are likely to create pollution and dumping grounds of junks; and

(G) the steps taken to check any attempt to push a policy which permits such imports?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) Second hand/used motor cars (including jeep and land rover), are classified under Exim Code No. 87.03 of ITC(HS) Classifications of Export and Import Items. Presently imports under the Exim Code are restricted.

(c) In view of India's International commitments, the restriction on import of this item may have to be removed latest by 1st April, 2001. However, all such imports will be subject to applicable rates of customs duty as well as provisions of any other national laws for the time being in force.

Industrial units closed down in private sector

312. SHRI E: BALANANDAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of industrial units in private sector closed down during the last three years in the country; and